

REMARKS

Summary of the Amendment

Upon entry of the instant Amendment, claims 1-8, 14, 15, 18-20, 22-112 and 115-145 will have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 11-13, 16, 17 and 21 will be pending.

Summary of the Official Action

In the instant Office Action, the Examiner again neglected to acknowledge Applicant's claim to foreign priority by neglecting to indicate on the form PTOL-326 that the certified copies of the priority documents have been received. The Examiner also improperly indicated that claims 6, 18, 19, 22, 23, 28-48, 51-54, 56, 57, 64, 77-96, 98-104, 138 and 139 were withdrawn from examination. Additionally, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7, 8, 14, 15, 20, 24-27, 49, 50, 55, 58-63, 65, 66, 69-76, 97, 136, 137 and 140-145 over the art of record. Finally, the Examiner indicated that claims 11-13, 16, 17 and 21 were allowed. By the present remarks, Applicant submits that the rejections have been overcome, and respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application.

Present Amendment is proper for entry

Applicant respectfully submits that the instant amendment is proper for entry after final rejection. Applicant notes that no question of new matter is presented nor are any new issues raised in entering the instant amendment of the claims and that no new search

would be required. Moreover, Applicant submits that the instant amendment places the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant requests the Examiner to enter the instant amendment, consider the merits of the same, and indicate the allowability of the present application and each of the pending claims. Applicant notes, in particular, that all of the rejected claims have been canceled and that the only remaining claims are claims which have been indicated to be allowed.

Status of the Certified Priority Document

The Examiner has neglected to acknowledge Applicant's claim to foreign priority on the form PTOL-326 by neglecting to indicate whether the required certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

Applicant filed the required certified copy of the priority document on April 15, 2004 and requests that the Examiner check box 12a1 on the form PTOL-326 in the next Official Action confirming receipt of the certified copy.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate such acknowledgment on form PTOL-326 in the next office action.

Traversal of Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Over Mueller with Palm, Bauer and Schmidt

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1-5, 7, 8, 14, 15, 20, 24-27, 49, 50, 55, 58, 62, 63, 65, 66, 69, 97, 136, 137 and 140-145 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as

P24717.A13

unpatentable over US Patent No. 6,173,925 to MUELLER et al. in view of US Patent No. 6,543,721 to PALM, US Patent No. 5,501,414 to BAUER and US Patent No. 6,595,467 to SCHMIDT.

The Examiner acknowledges that MUELLER lacks, among other things, the recited thickened region, using metal as the material for the panel and the stiffening element, and the recited two separate weld joints. However, the Examiner asserts that PALM and BAUER teach to make the panel and stiffening element of metal and to use a weld joint and that SCHMIDT teaches the recited thickened region. The Examiner then concludes that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of these documents. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot inasmuch as the above-noted claims have been canceled in an effort to advance prosecution and/or obtain issuance of the allowed claims.

Accordingly, Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the above-noted rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and indicate that these claims are allowable over the applied art of record.

Over Mueller, Schmidt, Bauer and Palm with Lackman

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 59-61 and 70-76 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over MUELLER in view of SCHMIDT, BAUER, PALM, and

P24717.A13

further in view of US Patent No. 4,256,790 to LACKMAN et al.

The Examiner acknowledges that MUELLER, SCHMIDT, BAUER and PALM lack, among other things, the recited reinforcing element. However, the Examiner asserts that this feature is taught by LACKMAN and that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of these documents. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot inasmuch as the above-noted claims have been canceled in an effort to advance prosecution and/or obtain issuance of the allowed claims.

Accordingly, Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the above-noted rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and indicate that these claims are allowable over the applied art of record.

Allowable Subject matter

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indicating that claims 11-13, 16, 17 and 21 are allowed. As these claims are the only pending claims, Applicant submits that the instant application is now ready for issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that none of the references of record, either taken alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious the Applicant's invention, as recited in each of the pending claims. The applied references of record have been discussed and distinguished, while significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Authorization is hereby given to refund excess payments and charge any additional fee necessary to have this paper entered to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Respectfully submitted,
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